

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 ISLAMABAD 016643

SIPDIS

STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID
USAID/W FOR A/AID ANDREW NATSIOS, JBRAUSE
DCHA/OFDA KISAACS, GGOTTLIEB, MMARK, RTHAYER, BDEEMER
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA
SOUTH ASIA RESPONSE MANAGEMENT TEAM
SOUTH ASIA EARTHQUAKE TASK FORCE
DCHA/FFP FOR JONATHAN DWORKEN
ANE DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR MARK WARD
BANGKOK FOR OFDA SENIOR REGIONAL ADVISOR TOM DOLAN
KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER
ROME PASS FODAG
GENEVA FOR RMA AND NKYLOH
NSC FOR JMELINE
EUCOM FOR POLA/J3/J4/J5
BRUSSELS FOR USAID PLERNER
NEW YORK FOR TMALY
SECDEF FOR SOLIC/PKHA, USDP/J3
JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC FOR J3/J4/J5
HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE FOR J3/J5

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [MASS](#) [ECON](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [EAGR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN - EARTHQUAKE: PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF
FOOD SITUATION

Summary

1. As of November 2, approximately 981,800 affected beneficiaries in Pakistan are receiving food aid. This is 98% of the 1 million caseload identified by the U.N. World Food Program (WFP). WFP's recent assessment estimates more than 2.3 million people are in need of food aid. Various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have stated that the number of 2.3 million people in need is too high. WFP representatives in Pakistan have stated that WFP will maintain its caseload of 1 million people. WFP has requested that the GOP provide food assistance to the remaining affected populations. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) is bringing in a food expert to assess the need for U.S. food assistance. End summary.

WFP Joint Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment

2. Shortly after the earthquake, WFP issued EMOP Pakistan 10491.0. The EMOP listed the number of beneficiaries as 1,000,000. On October 26, WFP, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) and OXFAM completed a joint Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment to determine the following: the amount of food in country, the amount of additional food coming into the country, the percentage of affected areas needing food, and the amount of food required to assist affected areas. This assessment identified 2,313,857 people in need of food assistance. The EMOP figures have been revised accordingly with the Food Requirement for a 5-month period (1 November 2005 through 31 March 2006) at 212,865 metric tons (MT).

3. The Government of Pakistan (GOP) agrees with this finding and is calculating food needs accordingly. However, various NGOs cite the number of 2.3 million people in need as too high. WFP representatives in Pakistan have told USAID and USAID/DART representatives that the WFP will maintain its caseload of 1 million and requests that the GOP provide food assistance to the remaining affected beneficiaries.

4. Additional findings from the WFP Joint Assessment indicate that rice and maize harvest could not be completed in some areas due to landslides and land fissures. Winter wheat planting would have started in November, but many seed stocks have been buried or spoiled. The next wheat planting season is summer 2006 with harvest in October 2006. Fifty percent of the heads of households interviewed in the assessment reported a total loss of grain stocks. Supplementary feeding will be necessary for 440,000 pregnant and lactating women, as well as children under the age of five in rural areas.

GOP Reaction to WFP Assessment

5. GOP Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL) Secretary Ismail Qureshi agreed with the WFP assessment that

SIPDIS

2.3 million people are in need of food aid. In order to meet the food aid need brought on by the earthquake, MINFAL requests 130,000 MT of wheat; 80,000 MT and 50,000 MT will be allocated to the AJK and NWFP, respectively. Calculations are based on a 6-month time frame.

NGO Reaction to WFP Assessment

16. On October 29, the USAID/DART Economic and Livelihoods Officer (ELO) met with representatives of the International Refugee Committee (IRC) and Mercy Corps (MC), each of which has at least 20 years experience working in country and employs a number of local residents. These NGOs hold that fewer than 2.3 million people are in need of emergency food assistance, given existing food stocks, local residents' coping strategies and strong social networks in earthquake-affected areas. The NGO representatives remarked that if populations living at high elevations are threatened with food insecurity, they travel to lower elevations for food. Because residences at high elevations are scattered and fairly inaccessible, effective food distribution programs would provide food at strategic distribution points. Food distribution will become more important in the winter months, as stocks run out.

Other Reactions to WFP Assessment

17. An interagency assessment is currently underway and is expected to be completed on/about November 8. The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank are facilitating this assessment; a damage and needs assessment for the agriculture and livestock sector is being conducted by the FAO with MINFAL. Preliminary findings of damage to crops and food stocks show that slides, collapse of stores, and subsequent rains caused widespread damage.

USAID/DART Reaction to WFP Assessment

18. According to the USAID/DART ELO, a major coping strategy for food insecurity is male heads of households journeying to the lowlands to purchase food, which they provide to their families upon their return. Many roads are impassable, but some back trails are accessible, allowing those who live at higher elevations to travel to lower elevations to access markets and purchase food. WFP reports of widespread loss of food are contrary to information gathered by the USAID/DART in the field and by NGO partners. These reports indicate that although some people lost food stocks in the earthquake, people in earthquake-affected areas have fairly significant stocks of food at present, given the recent harvest. People in affected areas store food underground or keep food in the form of livestock, thereby insulating themselves against food shocks. Populations in affected areas also draw upon their social networks for safety nets. Although some food assistance is needed, it is not an immediate need because of existing food stocks, coping mechanisms, and safety networks. According to the USAID/DART ELO, it is estimated that in general, existing food stocks of those sheltering in place could last up to two months, although those who choose to reside in camps will require immediate food assistance.

GOP Request for Assistance

19. The Pakistan Agriculture Storage Services Corporation (PASSCO) has "operating reserves" of 1 million MT of wheat. Prior to the earthquake, the planned distribution of the 1 million MT of stocks was: NWFP 270,000 MT; AJK 250,000 MT; Defense Department 150,000 MT; Northern Areas 100,000 MT; Balochistan 230,000. This distribution is based on last year's needs in these food deficit areas. The GOP estimates requirements of 123 kilograms (kg) of wheat per person per year. The provinces of Punjab and Sindh meet their own wheat needs by production and private commercial purchases.

110. The GOP does maintain an operating reserve of 1 million tons. Therefore, it does not have any reserves to support the affected beneficiaries. The GOP requests a total of 130,000 MT of wheat to meet the needs of 2.3 million affected people. To date, the GOP has loaned the WFP 30,000 metric tons (MT) of food aid. According to the GOP, the Government of Turkey has donated 50,000 MT of food aid which will arrive in 30 days. The GOP requests that the U.S. Government donate the remaining 50,000 MT of food aid.

Food Distributions to Date

11. WFP has the lead in coordinating food aid and logistics under the UN clusters groups framework. WFP reported that to date, 518,000 people have received WFP food rations, including high energy biscuits, wheat flour, vegetable oil, and pulses. Because many roads in valleys are fully or partially blocked, food distributions are taking place at roadblocks as far into the valleys as possible. From distribution points, mule packs carry food further up into the mountains. WFP reported a number of distribution constraints.

12. On October 30, a WFP representative told a USAID/DART representative that WFP plans to provide food assistance for 1 million people because it expects the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to provide food assistance for 150,000 people and the GOP to provide food assistance for the remaining people in need.

13. MINFAL does not anticipate any disruption of commercial sales by importing additional wheat for the affected areas. Commercial sales since July 2005 total approximately 580,000 MT. The commercially purchased wheat stays in Karachi and is not transported to the rest of Pakistan. Therefore, MINFAL does not anticipate a disruption in local markets by additional imported wheat.

Constraints to Food Distributions

14. With the onset of winter, food aid will need to be pre-positioned for approximately 200,000 affected beneficiaries in remote areas. Preliminary findings of damage and food need assessments show damage to crops and stores of seed and fertilizer. Food aid will become increasingly important in the winter months as remaining food stocks run out. The November winter wheat planting has been limited by damages to land and the destruction of agricultural inputs. Therefore, the 2006 spring/summer harvest of wheat will be drastically affected and may require food aid to continue through October 2006.

15. A USAID/DART food expert will arrive in country by 8 November to ascertain the level of U.S. food assistance that will be required.

CROCKER